IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 422-441 without prejudice.

Kindly add the following new claims:

442. (New) A kit for amplifying a target nucleic acid sequence contained in a target nucleic acid which may be present in a sample, said kit comprising an amplification oligonucleotide containing a first base sequence which hybridizes to a second base sequence contained in said target nucleic acid under amplification conditions, wherein said first base sequence contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety, and wherein said amplification oligonucleotide includes a promoter sequence.

443. (New) The kit of claim 442, wherein said first base sequence includes a cluster of at least 4 of said modified ribonucleotides.

444. (New) The kit of claim 442 further comprising a nucleic acid polymerase.

445. (New) The kit of claim 444, wherein said polymerase is an RNA polymerase.

446. (New) The kit of claim 442 further comprising nucleoside triphosphates.

447. (New) The kit of claim 442 further comprising at least one oligonucleotide probe which preferentially hybridizes to a base sequence contained in an amplification product generated using said amplification oligonucleotide over a base sequence contained in any non-target nucleic acid present in said sample under nucleic acid assay conditions.

448. (New) The kit of claim 447, wherein said amplification product contains the same base sequence as said target sequence or a sequence complementary thereto.

449. (New) The kit of claim 447, wherein said probe contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

450. (New) The kit of claim 447, wherein said probe includes a label.

451. (New) The kit of claim 442 further comprising a capture probe having a third base sequence, wherein said third base sequence hybridizes to a fourth base sequence contained in said target nucleic acid under nucleic acid assay conditions.

452. (New) The kit of claim 451, wherein said third base sequence contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

453. (New) The kit of claim 451, wherein the 3' terminus of said capture probe is capped or blocked to prevent or inhibit its use as a template for nucleic acid polymerase activity.

454. (New) The kit of claim 451 further comprising a solid support for directly or indirectly immobilizing said capture probe, wherein said capture probe includes a fifth base sequence which does not hybridize to said target nucleic acid under nucleic acid assay conditions.

455. (New) The kit of claim 442, wherein said amplification oligonucleotide is unlabeled.

456. (New) The kit of claim 442 further comprising written instructions for performing a polymerase chain reaction method of amplification.

457. (New) The kit of claim 442 further comprising written instructions for performing a transcription-based method of amplification.

458. (New) A kit for amplifying a target nucleic acid sequence contained in a target nucleic acid which may be present in a sample, said kit comprising:

an unlabeled amplification oligonucleotide containing a first base sequence which hybridizes to a second base sequence contained in said target nucleic acid under amplification conditions, wherein said first base sequence contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety; and

one or more reagents for performing an amplification reaction.

459. (New) The kit of claim 458, wherein said first base sequence includes a cluster of at least 4 of said modified ribonucleotides.

460. (New) The kit of claim 458, wherein each nucleotide of said amplification oligonucleotide is a ribonucleotide modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

461. (New) The kit of claim 458, wherein said reagents for performing an amplification reaction include a nucleic acid polymerase.

462. (New) The kit of claim 461, wherein said polymerase is an RNA polymerase.

463. (New) The kit of claim 458 further comprising nucleoside triphosphates.

464. (New) The kit of claim 458 further comprising at least one oligonucleotide probe which preferentially hybridizes to a base sequence contained in an amplification product generated using said amplification oligonucleotide over a base sequence contained in any non-target nucleic acid present in said sample under nucleic acid assay conditions.

465. (New) The kit of claim 464, wherein said amplification product contains the same base sequence as said target sequence or a sequence complementary thereto.

466. (New) The kit of claim 464, wherein said probe contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

467. (New) The kit of claim 464, wherein said probe includes a label.

468. (New) The kit of claim 458 further comprising a capture probe having a third base sequence, wherein said third base sequence hybridizes to a fourth base sequence contained in said target nucleic acid under nucleic acid assay conditions.

469. (New) The kit of claim 468, wherein said third base sequence contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

470. (New) The kit of claim 468, wherein the 3' terminus of said capture probe is capped or blocked to prevent or inhibit its use as a template for nucleic acid polymerase activity.

471. (New) The kit of claim 468 further comprising a solid support for directly or indirectly immobilizing said capture probe, wherein said capture probe includes a fifth base sequence which does not hybridize to said target nucleic acid under nucleic acid assay conditions.

472. (New) The kit of claim 458 further comprising written instructions for performing a polymerase chain reaction method of amplification.

473. (New) The kit of claim 458 further comprising written instructions for performing a transcription-based method of amplification.

474. (New) A kit for amplifying a target nucleic acid sequence contained in a target nucleic acid which may be present in a sample, said kit comprising first and second amplification oligonucleotides, wherein:

said first amplification oligonucleotide contains a first base sequence which hybridizes to a second base sequence contained in said target nucleic acid 5' to said target sequence under amplification conditions;

said second amplification oligonucleotide contains a third base sequence which hybridizes to a fourth base sequence contained in a nucleic acid sequence complementary to at least a portion of said target nucleic acid 3' to said target sequence under said amplification conditions; and

at least one of said first and third base sequences contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

475. (New) The kit of claim 474, wherein each of said first and third base sequences contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

476. (New) The kit of claim 474, wherein at least one of said first and third base sequences includes a cluster of at least 4 of said modified ribonucleotides.

477. (New) The kit of claim 474, wherein each nucleotide of at least one of said first and second amplification oligonucleotides is a ribonucleotide modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

478. (New) The kit of claim 474 further comprising a nucleic acid polymerase.

479. (New) The kit of claim 478, wherein said polymerase is an RNA polymerase.

480. (New) The kit of claim 474 further comprising nucleoside triphosphates.

481. (New) The kit of claim 474 further comprising at least one oligonucleotide probe which preferentially hybridizes to a base sequence contained in an amplification product generated using said first and second amplification oligonucleotides over a base sequence contained in any non-target nucleic acid present in said sample under nucleic acid assay conditions.

482. (New) The kit of claim 481, wherein said amplification product contains the same base sequence as said target sequence or a sequence complementary thereto.

483. (New) The kit of claim 481, wherein said probe contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

484. (New) The kit of claim 481, wherein said probe includes a label.

485. (New) The kit of claim 474 further comprising a capture probe having a fifth base sequence, wherein said fifth base sequence hybridizes to a sixth base sequence contained in said target nucleic acid under nucleic acid assay conditions.

486. (New) The kit of claim 485, wherein said fifth base sequence contains one or more ribonucleotides modified to include a 2'-O-methyl substitution to the ribofuranosyl moiety.

487. (New) The kit of claim 485, wherein the 3' terminus of said capture probe is capped or blocked to prevent or inhibit its use as a template for nucleic acid polymerase activity.